

never forget the tragedy that took place at Khojaly.

At the time, the Khojaly tragedy was widely documented by the international media, including the Boston Globe, Washington Post, New York Times, Financial Times, and many other European and Russian news agencies.

Khojaly, a town in the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, now under the control of Armenian forces, was the site of the largest killing of ethnic Azerbaijani civilians. With a population of approximately 7,000, Khojaly was one of the largest urban settlements of the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan.

According to Human Rights Watch and other international observers the massacre was committed by the ethnic Armenian armed forces, reportedly with the help of the Russian 366th Motor Rifle Regiment. Human Rights Watch described the Khojaly Massacre as “the largest massacre to date in the conflict” over Nagorno-Karabakh. In a 1993 report, the watchdog group stated “there are no exact figures for the number of Azeri civilians killed because Karabakh Armenian forces gained control of the area after the massacre” and “while it is widely accepted that 200 Azeris were murdered, as many as 500–1,000 may have died.”

Azerbaijan has been a strong strategic partner and friend of the United States. The tragedy of Khojaly was a crime against humanity and I urge my colleagues to join me in standing with Azerbaijanis as they commemorate this tragedy.

RECOGNIZING PAUL TAIT

HON. SANDER M. LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 5, 2014

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Paul Tait on the occasion of his retirement from the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) after 42 years of dedicated service.

Paul attained his undergraduate and graduate degrees from the University of Michigan. He came to SEMCOG in 1972, and was named Executive Director of that organization in 1998. Under Paul's leadership, SEMCOG has used data and information to help make decisions resulting in literally billions of dollars in road, transit, and water infrastructure investment.

As important as data and information are to regional planning, local government actions are also critical. Paul recognized this and worked to give all communities—large and small—a voice in the process.

In a speech at the National Defense Executive Reserve Conference in 1957, President Eisenhower, who of course had served as Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Europe during World War II, made this remarkable assertion: “Plans are worthless, but planning is everything.” He went on to say that while there are indeed some immutable truths, most of what we confront in our daily lives changes over time. President Eisenhower's basic point was that we shouldn't put too much faith in static plans, but rather invest in planning that assumes that conditions will change.

Eisenhower's admonition is relevant because, for more than four decades, SEMCOG

has been the regional planning partnership in Southeast Michigan. Over that time, our area has seen an astonishing amount of change. SEMCOG's task has been to recognize the changing circumstances and needs in our area—whether it's land use, transportation, air quality, water infrastructure, or economic development—and help our communities shape a regional public policy that is responsive and dynamic. Paul has played a key role in SEMCOG's work and effectiveness.

Among his many other accomplishments, Paul is the devoted husband of Chris. They have four children and six grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Paul Tait for his leadership at SEMCOG and his commitment to the citizens of Southeast Michigan.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 5, 2014

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was \$10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is \$17,444,385,246,890.50. We've added \$6,817,508,197,977.42 to our debt in 5 years. This is over \$6.8 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

U.S. POLICY TOWARD SUDAN AND SOUTH SUDAN

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 5, 2014

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, last week, I chaired a subcommittee hearing on U.S. policy toward Sudan and South Sudan. The hearing was very important, and not only because the United States Government has been involved in Sudan and its various crises for the past three decades. Many of us first became interested in Sudan in the 1980s because of the persistent reports of modern-day slavery, in which northern Arabs enslaved African southerners. My office helped to bring one of these unfortunate people to America for medical treatment after he was freed, and his story affected me deeply.

Ker Deng had been kidnapped into slavery while still a child, and while he was an adolescent, the man who held him in bondage rubbed peppers in his eyes, blinded him and later abandoned him. Ker is studying here in the United States thanks to his benefactor, Ellen Ratner, and is awaiting a second operation to help him recover at least some of his eyesight. How many other Sudanese will never have that opportunity or even achieve their freedom? For example, Ker's mother has never been freed from bondage.

We began supporting southern Sudanese efforts to end the oppression from the North in the mid-1990s. In 2005, we helped both North and South achieve the Comprehensive Peace

Agreement, CPA, to end the long civil war and provide the steps for a mutually beneficial peace and productive coexistence. Unfortunately, the rebellion in the Darfur region distracted from efforts to fulfill that agreement.

Khartoum's alliance with the Janjaweed Arabs resulted in mass killings and displacement in Darfur. An estimated 1.9 million people were displaced, more than 240,000 people were forced into neighboring Chad, and an estimated 450,000 people were killed. At the time, Congress insisted that this was genocide. Eventually, the Bush administration concurred, but the United Nations declined to go so far in their terminology, calling what happened in Darfur “crimes against humanity.”

A peace agreement between the main rebel force in Darfur and the Government of Sudan was signed in May 2006, but it did not last. In fact, no sustained agreement has been reached between the government and Darfur rebel groups—partly because these groups have continued to split and form offshoots, but also because the Khartoum government has not appeared willing to resolve the Darfur situation constructively. In June 2005, the International Criminal Court initiated an investigation that resulted in arrest warrants for Sudan President Omar al-Bashir and three other government officials and militia leaders. None of these warrants has been served, none of the four have been taken into custody and the Government of Sudan has refused to cooperate with the ICC.

Meanwhile, the CPA remained unimplemented. In January 2011, South Sudan, which had been a semiautonomous region of the country since the signing of the CPA, voted in a referendum on whether to remain part of Sudan or become independent. Having been marginalized and mistreated for decades, it was not surprising that southern Sudanese voted overwhelmingly—at the level of 98.8 percent—to become an independent nation. On July 9, 2011, South Sudan became the world's newest nation. However, these unimplemented elements of the CPA would bedevil the new country from its birth.

A referendum in the disputed Abyei region and consultations on the status of Sudan's Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states were never completed. In May 2011, Sudanese armed forces assumed control of towns in Abyei, quickly forcing at least 40,000 residents to flee. Within weeks, fighting spread to Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states, as Khartoum sought to crush the Sudan People's Liberation Army—North, which had fought with southerners in the North-South civil war. Northern attacks on residents in those three areas continue unabated.

Last year, Sudan and South Sudan engaged in a conflict over oil supplies from the South, involving allegations that Khartoum was undercounting the level of oil flow to cheat South Sudan, as well as the southern seizure of the oil town of Heglig. Again, this dispute was largely the result of unresolved issues from the CPA.

South Sudan continues to be engaged in a conflict that began last December, despite a cessation of hostilities agreement. Thousands have been killed and tens of thousands have been displaced. Exact figures are constantly shifting because this conflict continues. I will soon introduce a resolution offering a sequenced approach to reaching a lasting resolution to this newest crisis. This conflict also